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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 SAB-01 ACDA-05

IO-10 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SR-02 ORM-01 /088 W
---------- 118964
R 101230Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2279
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0431

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINS PLO XF
SUBJECT: FEDAYEEN REACTION TO FAILURE OF CAIRO QUADRIPARTITE MEETINGS

SUMMARY; PLO LEADERSHIP'S SUSPICIOUS AND UNHAPPY RE-ACTION TO "FAILURE" OF CAIRO QUADRIPARTITE MEETINGS HAS REINVIGORATED EVER-PRESENT FEDAYEEN FEARS OF POSSIBLE "BETRAYAL" OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE BY SADAT AND STAB-IN-BACK BY KING HUSSEIN. PROSPECT IS THAT 'ARAFAT AND CO. WILL GIVEUP CONCERTED PROPAGANDA, POLITICAL AND MILITARY OFFENSIVE AIMED AT FORCING SADAT TO KEEP IN STEP WITH PALESTINIANS, "NEUTRALIZE" HUSSEIN, AND PRE-SERVE GENERAL ARAB SUPPORT FOR PLO AMBITIONS. END SUMMARY.
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1. WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED AT SOME LENGTH PLO LEADERSHIP'S DISAPPOINTED AND SUSPICIOUS REACTION TO "FAILURE" OF RECENT QUADRIPARTITE MEETINGS IN CAIRO (BEIRUT A-04, JAN 7). IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THIS REACTION IS EVEN MORE PROFOUNDLY ADVERSE THAN WE HAD REALIZED. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED RE TENOR OF DISCUSSIONS DURING PLO EX COMM MEET-
INGS HELD JAN 7-9 IN DAMASCUS INDICATES THAT 'ARAFAT AND CO. ARE IN FACT EXTREMELY UPSET OVER WHAT THEY REGARD AS EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN FAILURE TO GIVE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT TO PLO AMBITIONS TO REGAIN SOME FORM OF INCREASED FEDAYEEN PRESENCE IN JORDAN. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT (OBVIOUSLY PLO-INSPIRED) CIRCULATING HERE, EGYPTIAN BEHAVIOR WAS PARTICU-LARLY OBJECTIONABLE, WITH FAHMI HAVING GONE SO FAR AS TO PROPOSE THAT PLO GIVE SADAT "BLANK CHECK" THAT WOULD ENABLE HIM TO NEGOTIATE ON BEHALF OF PALESTINIANS AT GENEVA. RESULT HAS BEEN TO HEIGHTEN EVER-PRESENT FEDAYEEN SUSPICION THAT "TREACHERY" IS AFOOT IN SOME FORM OF ALLEGED EGYPTIAN-JORDANIAN-US AGREEMENT ON NEW FORMULA FOR WEST BANK AND FURTHER SINAI DISENGAGEMENT THAT WOULD ENABLE SADAT TO PROCEED WITH STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT UNILATERAL SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL "UNDER AMERICAN COVER".

2. THESE SUSPICIONS HAVE BEEN VOICED BY PLO (WAFA) NEWS AGENCY AND PLO SPOKESMAN YASIR ABD RABBO REPEATEDLY OVER PAST THREE DAYS. HOWEVER, BEST INDICATION OF HOW SERIOUSLY THEY ARE BEING TAKEN CAME FROM 'ARAFAT HIMSELF DURING INTERVIEW WITH ERIC ROULEAU CARRIED IN LE MONDE JAN 6. ACCORDING TO ROULEAU, 'ARAFAT INSISTED THAT US AND ISRAEL HAVE MADE "CONCRETE PROPOSALS TO CAIRO AND AMMAN CONCERN-ING RESTITUTION OF PART OF SINAI TO EGYPT AND PART OF WEST BANK TO JORDAN" AND THAT THESE PROPOSALS "ARE CUR-RENTLY BEING STUDIED" IN BOTH CAPITALS. HE LINKED ANY FURTHER EGYPTIAN "CONCESSIONS" IN SINAI WITH "AMERICAN-ZIONIST INTRIGUES" AND WARNED THAT THEY WOULD FORCE FEDAYEEN TO TAKE "NECESSARY MEASURES" TO PREVENT "DETERIO-RATION" (I.E., EGYPT'S DEFECTION FROM ARAB RANKS) IN ARAB SOLIDARITY). SUCH MEASURES, 'ARAFAT TOLD ROULEAU, WOULD CAUSE ME SITUATION TO WORSEN AND RESULT IN "SEVERE ATTACKS ON VITAL INTERESTS OF US AND WEST IN GENERAL".
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3. COMMENT: AS ALWAYS, TWO THINGS MOST LIKELY TO AROUSE FEDAYEEN APPREHENSIONS TO FEVER PITCH ARE (A) EGYPT'S CONTINUED ADHERENCE TO STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATING APPROACH THAT COULD LEAD TO UNILATERAL EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT AND/OR PROLONGED EXCLUSION OF PLO FROM SETTLEMENT PROCESS, AND (B) SIGNS THAT KING HUSSEIN, WITH EGYPTIAN AND PERHAPS OTHER ARAB SUPPORT, IS MERELY "SITTING TIGHT" AND BIDING

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HIS TIME IN CONVICTION THAT JORDAN'S ROLE IN SETTLEMENT PROCESS WILL EVENTUALLY RE RESTORED AS RABAT SUMMIT RESOLUTIONS FAVORING PLO BECOME INCREASINGLY ERODED AND NEGATED. 'ARAFAT AND CO. SEEM CONVINCED THAT BOTH TRENDS ARE WELL UNDER WAY. THIS BEING THE CASE, WE CAN EXPECT ANOTHER CONCERTED PLO PROPAGANDA AND POLITICAL OFFENSIVE AIMED AT RALLYING BROAD SUPPORT FROM OTHER ARAB REGIMES AND ARAB PUBLIC OPINION IN EFFORT PREVENT SADAT'S DEFECTION", PRESERVE ARAB "SOLIDARITY" VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL, AND "NEUTRALIZE" KING HUSSEIN'S ALLEGED AMBITIONS. (IN VIEW OF WAFA OUTPUT MENTIONED ABOVE--AS WELL AS 'ARAFAT'S JAN 9 MEETING WITH SYRIAN PRES ASSAD IN WHICH HE REPORTEDLY URGED CONTINUED SARG SUPPORT FOR PLO OBJECTIVES VIS-A-VIS JORDAN (AND PROBABLY EGYPT)--THIS CAMPAIGN APPEARS TO HAVE BEGUN ALREADY.) WE CAN ALSO EXPECT, AS NOTED OUR A-04, FURTHER ESCALATION OF FEDAYEEN "ARMED STRUGGLE" TACTICS SLONG AND ACROSS LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, WITHIN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.
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